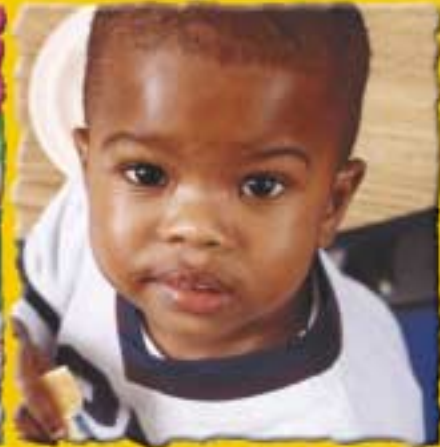


Building Blocks for Fun and Healthy Meals

A Menu Planner
for the Child
and Adult Care
Food Program





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Introduction

You Are a Vital Link to Children

As a child care provider, you play a key role in children's lives.

By working with children each day, you help them learn and grow. By serving them nutritious meals and snacks, you help children get the nourishment and energy *they need* to learn and grow—and be healthy. That makes your job very important.

Research has shown that there are crucial relationships between nutrition and health, and nutrition and learning. You are in a special position to show children what it means to eat for good health, including how important it is to eat a variety of foods.

More children are in child care today than ever before. Some spend more time in child care than they do at home. The meals and snacks served in your center through USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) are an important part of providing proper care.



In this menu planner, you will find information on how to meet your children's food needs. Use it to...

- learn more about the CACFP meal pattern requirements.
- find practical advice on how to serve high quality meals and snacks.
- get ideas and tips for menu planning and nutrition education.
- learn more about the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the USDA Food Guide Pyramid.

The menu planner comes complete with...

- sample menus.
- guidance on keeping and using production records.
- information on food safety and sanitation.

When used in combination with *Child Care Recipes: Food for Health and Fun*, this CACFP menu planner is your best tool to use as you plan nutritious meals for the children in your care.

